



State of Arizona
Department of Education

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Public Instruction



Early Childhood Education Alert

ECSE 3

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Alert To Early Childhood Special Education Administrators – Hearing Screenings

A hearing screening conducted according to Department of Health Services (DHS) regulations must be administered prior to proceeding with assessing a preschool child to determine eligibility for preschool special education services. Otherwise, a child's poor performance on an assessment may be primarily due to hearing issues rather than cognitive deficits. Therefore, it is not permissible to indicate on evaluation reports that the child was "unable to be tested" nor is the use of "functional hearing" tools permissible. Otoacoustic Emission (OAE) testing is often the more practical solution to screening hearing in infants, toddlers and children that would have difficulty responding to pure tone testing instructions due to physical, cognitive and language deficits. OAE testing requires no behavioral response from the individual.

Regulatory Requirements:

R9-13-102 Hearing Screening Population

- A. A school administrator shall ensure that the following students have a hearing screening *EACH* school year:
1. A student enrolled in preschool, kindergarten, or grade 1, 2, 6 or 9; ... 5. A student receiving special education ...

R9-13-103 Hearing Screening Requirements

- A. Before performing a hearing screening, a screener shall visually inspect a student's outer ears for:
1. Fluid or drainage, 2. Blood, 3. An open sore, or 4. A foreign object.
- B. If a screener inspects a student's outer ears and finds any of the conditions in subsection (A), the screener shall not perform a hearing screening.
- C. A screener shall perform a hearing screening in each ear using one of the following hearing screening methods:
1. Four-frequency, pure tone hearing screening . . . 2. Three-frequency, pure tone hearing screening with tympanometry . . . 3. Otoacoustic emissions hearing screening using otoacoustic emissions equipment that generates a pass or no pass result . . .

R9-13-105 Referral; Notification; Follow-up

- C. If a student does not pass a second hearing screening or does not complete a second hearing screening within the time period required under R9-13-104(B), a school administrator shall provide to the student's parent, within 10 days from the date of the second hearing screen or from the date the period for completing a second hearing screening ends, a referral to have the student's current hearing status evaluated by one of the following:
1. An audiologist, a physician, or a primary care practitioner if the screener used only the four-frequency, pure tone hearing screening method;
 2. A physician or primary care practitioner if the student did not pass the tympanometry portion, but passed the three-frequency, pure tone portion of the hearing screening;
 3. An audiologist if the student did not pass the three-frequency, pure tone portion, but passed the tympanometry portion of the hearing screening; or
 4. An audiologist, a physician, or a primary care practitioner if the screener used the otoacoustic emissions hearing screening method. . . .
- F. Under State Board of Education rule R7-2-401, a school administrator shall ensure that a student referred under subsections (A) or (C) is evaluated. . . .

Resource Links:

Department of Health Services Rules, http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/Title_09/9-13.htm
Arizona Administrative Code, http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/Title_07/7-02.htm#Article_4